

Reverend Belcher was a man of great faith and energy. He enthusiastically embraced every opportunity to serve congregations and communities throughout our Nation, bringing with him a keen empathy for the local community. His service extended to churches throughout the country including CMEs in Los Angeles, Oklahoma City, and Cleveland. Under the leadership of Bishop Vernon Byrd, Reverend Belcher became an Itinerant Elder in the African Methodist Episcopal Church at Bethel AME in San Francisco in 1997. Reverend Belcher served as the organizing pastor at two churches in California, the Upper Room Christian Church in Los Angeles and the Resurrection AME Church in Richmond. Reverend Belcher dedicated every day of his adult life to his passion for God and community development. At the time of his passing, the Reverend was serving as pastor of St. John AME Church in St. Louis, Missouri.

Reverend Belcher fought for justice and equality for African Americans, low-income families, and communities of color, and he worked tirelessly to make this a better world. His dedication to public service throughout the Bay Area is both diverse in its capacities and remarkable in its scope. In 2001, he was elected to the Richmond City Council where he served a 4-year term. In addition to serving the city of Richmond, Reverend Belcher worked as an administrative assistant to Oakland Mayor Lionel Wilson. He was a member of the Peralta Community College District board and served on the board of the NAACP's Richmond branch.

I met Reverend Belcher while a student at Mills College in the early 1970s. I attended a class he taught and was amazed by his keen intellect, his deep insight, and his determination to teach and speak the truth.

The contributions Reverend Belcher made to his community throughout his life are innumerable. He was a true inspiration, and an exceptional role model, especially for young men and women of color striving to build up their communities, contribute to their neighborhoods, and improve their opportunities so that they may pursue productive and full lives. His legacy will surely live on through the lasting impact he made on so many lives.

Today, California's 9th Congressional District salutes and honors Reverend Charles Belcher. We extend our deepest condolences to his family and loved ones, especially his mother, Ms. Lottie M. Belcher, his wife, Ms. Doris Denson-Belcher, his children Kimberly and Charles II, his step-children Bonita, Tony, Dana, and Sheila, his grandchildren, and the many special members of his close and devoted family as well as his countless friends. May his soul rest in peace.

**HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE  
OF DAN PACKER, CHIEF OF THE  
EAST PIERCE FIRE DEPARTMENT**

**HON. ADAM SMITH**

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, September 8, 2008*

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor the memory of Dan Packer,

chief of the East Pierce Fire Department, who recently died in the line of duty as he was helping to save lives and property from the wildfires burning in northern California. Dan was a veteran firefighter, respected leader, wildfire expert, as well as a father and a friend to many. His service to our community and his friendship will be sorely missed.

Originally from Montana, Dan was an avid rodeo bull rider and first joined the fire service in Burien, Washington, in 1981. He began serving as chief of the fire department in Bonney Lake in 1995 and was instrumental in joining several jurisdictions into an organization now known as the East Pierce Fire District. Today, East Pierce serves over 75,000 citizens across nearly 150 square miles with the support of more than 100 firefighters and staff members and 40 volunteers. Dan Packer also served as a president of the Washington Fire Chiefs.

As a part of a Washington State-based incident response team, Chief Packer was called to service to respond to wildfires that have affected more than 600 acres of Siskiyou County in northern California. In this role, he combated the Panther Fire and was preparing to assume the duties of the division supervisor for time—battling the blazes in the Klamath National Forest near the town of Happy Camp. Reports indicate that on Saturday, July 26, 2008, while scouting the fire, flames suddenly overcame Chief Packer and, tragically, he was not able to escape.

I extend my heartfelt condolences and prayers to the East Pierce Fire Department, the many firefighters who had the honor of serving at Dan Packer's side in both California and Washington State, and particularly to his wife, four daughters, two grandchildren, and his mother in this time of terrible grief and loss.

**RECOGNIZING INTERNATIONAL  
LITERACY DAY**

**HON. PATRICK J. TIBERI**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, September 8, 2008*

Mr. TIBERI. Madam Speaker, today we commemorate International Literacy Day, a day that provides us an opportunity to assess the status of literacy and adult learning both in our country and around the world.

While much progress has been made since the first Literacy Day 42 years ago, much remains to be done. According to United Nations estimates, some 774 million adults lack minimum literacy skills. One in five adults is still not literate and two-thirds of them are women.

Fortunately, there are countless organizations and individuals dedicated to ensuring that every man, woman and child has an opportunity to learn basic skills. In my home state, the Ohio Literacy Network has been meeting the needs of adult learners for 21 years. Since its inception in 1987, the network has played a leading role in promoting awareness of adult literacy needs, advocating on behalf of adult learners and service providers, encouraging public-private literacy efforts and facilitating the exchange of literacy information. In short, the Ohio Literacy Network is

dedicated to building stronger communities by providing opportunities to any adult wanting to learn basic literacy skills.

I salute the Ohio Literacy Network, and similar organizations throughout the world, as they man the front lines in the battle to better the lives of individuals by improving their basic skills.

**HONORING THE RETIREMENT OF  
CAPTAIN RUSSELL L. SHAFFER  
FROM THE UNITED STATES  
NAVY**

**HON. TOM DAVIS**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, September 8, 2008*

Mr. DAVIS of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Captain Russell L. Shaffer, Judge Advocate General's Corps, United States Navy, who is retiring after more than 21 years of faithful service to our Nation, culminating in his service as the Department of the Navy's Director of Legislation.

After earning a bachelor of arts degree from Ohio Wesleyan University in 1983, Captain Shaffer was commissioned in 1985. He earned his juris doctorate degree from Case Western Reserve University School of Law in 1987, and began his active duty service in the Navy JAG Corps Student Program.

He served on three occasions in the Naval Legal Service Command, as Commanding Officer of the Naval Legal Service Office North Central at the Washington Navy Yard, as the Executive Officer of the Europe and Southwest Asia office in Naples, Italy, and as a prosecutor, defense counsel, and claims attorney in Norfolk, Virginia.

He also served several tours in the Office of the Judge Advocate General, as an attorney in the General Litigation Division, as the Deputy Executive Assistant to the JAG and as the Executive Assistant to the JAG.

He served as the Staff Judge Advocate for Commander, Amphibious Group TWO in Norfolk, Virginia, and for the Commander, THIRD Fleet in San Diego, California. His other assignments have included tours on the staff of the Chief of Naval Operations, with the Commander, South Atlantic Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, and as a Legislative Counsel in the Navy's Office of Legislative Affairs.

During his distinguished career, Captain Shaffer earned master of laws in environmental law from the George Washington University in 1996 and he has been an active member of the Ohio Bar. His personal decorations include the Legion of Merit, 3 awards, the Meritorious Service Medal, 5 awards, the Navy-Marine Corps Commendation, 2 awards, and the Navy-Marine Corps Achievement Medal.

It is through the commitment and sacrifice of Americans like Captain Shaffer that our Nation is able to continue upon the path of democracy and strive for the betterment of mankind. I am proud, Madam Speaker, as a fellow Virginian, to thank him and his family for his honorable service to our Nation in the United States Navy. I wish him fair winds and following seas as he concludes a distinguished naval career.